

CAMDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING
September 6, 2012

PRESENT: Chair Chris MacLean; Members Richard Householder, Jan MacKinnon and Lowrie Sargent; Alternate Member Sid Lindsley; Don White, Select Board Liaison to the Planning Board

ABSENT: Member Kerry Sabanty; CEO Steve Wilson

ALSO PRESENT: Jean Freedman, interested citizen

Mr. MacLean called the meeting to order at 5:10 pm.

1. ELECTION of OFFICERS

The Board agreed that the Comprehensive Plan Committee should have officers separate from those of the Planning Board.

MOTION by Mr. Householder seconded by Ms. MacKinnon to nominate Lowrie Sargent as Chair of the Comprehensive Plan Committee.

VOTE: 4-0-1 with Mr. Sargent abstaining

MOTION by Ms. MacKinnon seconded by Mr. MacLean to nominate Richard Householder as Vice Chair.

VOTE: 4-0-1 with Mr. Householder abstaining

2. MINUTES

August 16, 2012:

MOTION by Mr. Householder seconded by Mr. Lindsley that the Minutes of August 16, 2012, because of the way they lay out the Committee's discussion regarding the plans for proceeding with the revision of the Comprehensive Plan, should be handed to the Select Board as written to serve as the required update.

VOTE: 4-0-1 with Mr. Sargent abstaining because he had not had time to read the minutes

Mr. Householder noted an error at Page 3 Line 20 – the word “gals” should be changed to the word “goals”. That correction will be made and Mr. Sargent will review the Draft Minutes and let the Recording Secretary know if any further changes should be made before they are sent to the Select Board for their September 18 meeting.

3. PRESENTATION to the SELECT BOARD

Mr. Sargent asked the Recording Secretary to put the information contained in the Minutes of August 16 into a spreadsheet to present to the Select Board along with the actual minutes. He believes it will be easier to understand, and it will serve to better cross-check staff assignments to make sure that one person - or one committee - is not being overloaded at one particular point in time.

4. REPORT TO SELECT BOARD

The Committee's report to the Select Board on the 18th is to include a time frame for staging the work and for attracting citizen volunteers to do the work of re-writing the various chapters.

It was first proposed that the chapters that will need review by Town committees be allocated six-weeks per group to start – some will obviously need longer than that. Ms. MacKinnon believes that the Committee should ask each group what *they* think their schedule will be – let them decide. The Committee decided that they should meet with all the committees at one time at the beginning of the process of assigning the work. One presentation can be made to everyone at once explaining the process and what work needs to be done within certain time frames. This was a change from the original concept of inviting groups in one-by-one, and will make the work of the Committee much easier in this regard. Once each group is given their charge, they can meet and determine what their schedule will be to complete their work on time.

The Committee will need to determine themselves what time frame they will need to review the groups' first drafts with them. Some of these chapters will be more contentious than others and will need more revisions and closer work with the group involved. Members had been asked to review the Plan and familiarize themselves with each chapter for the purpose of reviewing the scope of the work that will be required for updating each.

→ Committee members should come to the meeting on September 20 having reviewed the list of chapters so they are able to come up with a schedule for reviewing the working groups' drafts of the revised chapters.

Mr. MacLean suggested that before they go to the Select Board with this schedule, the Committee needs to be clear themselves exactly when the revised draft is due to the State. The CEO was to have had that information this evening, but he was on vacation and that answer was still unknown. There was also the unanswered question of whether or not the draft revised Plan could be reviewed incrementally by the State. Before the Committee comes up with an actual proposal, these two questions need to be answered. Mr. MacLean also asked whether the time line to submitting an updated Plan begins with the State's date of approval or with the Town's vote to adopt the Plan.

→ Mr. Sargent needs the answers to the questions regarding time frames from Mr. Wilson so he can provide accurate information to the Select Board.

Don White suggested that the Select Board will offer opinions and suggestions when the Committee presents their proposals along the way, but they won't set deadlines for the Committee's work. He will speak with the Town Manager about setting an outside deadline for the completed draft revised Plan.

Ms. MacKinnon suggested that once the deadline is set, each chapter working group should be asked if they can meet those deadlines. In order to do that they need to be familiar with the subject matter and Mr. Householder suggested that each group get a copy of the Chapter and the related Goals prior to the initial meeting. Mr. MacLean suggested that because some of

the information in the chapters is “stale” that the working groups be encouraged to be pro-active in re-writing their assignments. Mr. Householder suggested that it will be the Committee’s responsibility to give each working group specific instructions and guidelines on what needs to be revised. Mr. Sargent suggested that a Committee member be assigned as a liaison to each working group to serve as a resource and answer questions.

Jean Friedman had proposed at the last meeting that the Committee consider having someone serve as a liaison between the various groups and the Committee. She expanded on that concept saying that the liaison would do exactly what Mr. Sargent suggested and take the burden of attending the group meeting off the members of the Committee. This person would either attend the meetings, or they would review the minutes, in order to monitor progress, keep the group focused and move the work along. The liaison would report regularly to the Committee to update them concerning the status of the drafts; to relay questions from the working groups; or to pass along concerns. Ms. Friedman is offering to serve in this capacity herself, having run several organizations and coordinated several large projects that required similar skills of facilitating communications and organizing multiple tasks to meet goals.

She suggests starting with as many working groups as possible in the beginning to get what work they can get done finished early on. There will be some that need to do more research and will need more time to write and to think their way through the process.

Mr. Sargent suggested that if a liaison from the Committee attends these meetings it might reduce the numbers of questions coming back to the Committee and avoid delays in waiting for those answers. Ms. MacKinnon likes Ms. Friedman’s approach because she is not sure she is qualified to answer many of the questions that might have to do with data, etc. The Committee is short-handed to begin with since Mr. Sabanty remains too ill to attend meetings and the Committee is lacking an Alternate Member. She thinks it will be an onerous task to attend all those meetings over the next two years.

Mr. Sargent is concerned that information will get lost if the questions and answers have to go through a middle person. Ms. Friedman offered to do flow charts showing the groups’ progress. Each group will need a version of the Plan in Word format so they can keep a record of their changes. Although each group may not keep actual minutes, they will most probably be producing a copy of the section of their assignment that shows the changes marked up in the Word document.

The Committee will need the permission of the Select Board to create the volunteer liaison/coordinator position as proposed by Ms. Friedman, and Mr. Sargent will make that request when he goes before the Select Board on the 18th.

Mr. Householder reminded the Committee that they will need to prepare an Executive Summary to accompany the Plan. Mr. Wilson was to have looked in the record of the last re-write of the Plan to find if Jeff Nims had written a Summary that could be used as a starting point. Whether he found anything is not known.

→ The Committee asks Mr. Wilson to look at Mr. Nims’ files for an Executive Summary.

Mr. MacLean, referencing the manual prepared by the State Planning Office: *UPDATING YOUR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 50 Recommendations for Making Plan Updates More Effective* noted that the formatting of Camden Plan's does not comply with the recommendations of this 2008 manual. He thinks the Committee also needs to see a copy of the actual *Growth Management Act* since it is referenced so often in this work.

→ Mr. Wilson was asked to check with the State to find out if revised plans must follow this new format, and to obtain copies of the *Act* for the Committee.

Mr. Sargent repeated his interest in working to make sure that this revision of the Plan is an actual planning document. He does not find the way the current version is written to offer any real tools for planning. Using "Population" as an example he noted that the proportion of Camden's elderly population is growing while fewer young people with families are moving here. The Comprehensive Plan should project what that means to the Town: What kinds of jobs need to be created to attract young families to the area? Is affordable housing a factor? Is the conversion of year-round residences to seasonal residences -- "dark houses" -- a factor? What should the Town be doing to plan for these changes, and to perhaps reverse them?

→ The Recording Secretary, in the CEO's absence, will contact the State to get information on Plan requirements and time frames.

→ Mr. Sargent will prepare a cover memo to the Select Board outlining the time frame, the working group assignments proposal, and requesting permission to create the Liaison/Coordinator position between the Comprehensive Plan Committee and the Working Groups.

→ The Recording Secretary will prepare a spreadsheet to accompany this memorandum.

There being no further business before the Committee, they adjourned at 5:50 pm to convene as the Planning Board.

Respectfully submitted

Jeanne Hollingsworth, Recording Secretary